



HEADQUARTERS
DELTA MILITARY ASSISTANCE COMMAND
USAAG, IV CTZ, APO 96215
Office of the Deputy for CORDS



26 January 1970

Dear Dan:

This will, of necessity, be brief and to the point. I am in hot water up to my ears about Chau, principally with the No. 1 Ambassador. The No. 3 Ambassador is sympathetic, but essentially believes this is a battle I brought on myself and one I will have to fight. So be it and I may eventually have to leave over this issue. This, however, is not the important part of this letter.

As you are aware, the government, using every means of coercion possible, has acquired 102 signatures on a petition requesting removal of immunity from Chau and the other two deputies. By voice vote in the Assembly, they were barely able to muster 70 deputies who approved the basic investigating committee findings that Chau and the other two deputies had had dealings with Communists. (In Chau's case, the only dealings with Communists alleged is the series of meetings with his brother Hien.) The additional signatures were achieved by varying combinations of pressure and payoff. One deputy (one who did not sign) has reported that he received three telephone calls a day during the putsch to achieve the 102-signatures. The first phone call was from an individual who identified himself as a Communist thanking him for the continued support of the "Communist brothers" in the Assembly. A short while later, he would receive a call from a man who identified himself as an ARVN Ranger. This man would berate him for supporting the "Communist members" in the Assembly. He announced that his mother, father and brother had been killed by the Communists and that he (the ARVN Ranger) would "take care" of the deputy and his family if he did not stop supporting the Communists. A third phone call was received, usually for the wife, stating that it was understood the family needed some money and that 500,000 piasters would be made available when her husband signed the petition. Regardless of how it was done or how widespread was the practice, the common consensus among the Vietnamese is that loyal opposition to the government from elected Assembly members is no longer possible and that even the trappings of representative government are dead.

Chau, who sincerely fears for his life, has been in hiding for the past week and apparently is making plans to go to another country, probably Cambodia, to ask for political asylum. From there he hopes to make his way to Paris where he will be faced with the problem of earning a living while doing whatever it is he will be doing while he is there. None of this, of course, can take place without some unusual risk on Chau's part, but he feels he has no alternative but to take the risk. He expects to slip out of country some time between the 1st and 7th of February,

possibly under the cover (and protection) of the Tet ceasefire. If and when this happens and if he does get to Paris, he will stay initially with a friend, a Mr. Duong Tan Chung, 7 Rue de Recoq, Paris Xe, telephone: 2851926.

As you are aware, Chau has gone through his cash assets since his election to the Assembly in 1967, spending all of his funds on principally political matters and probably a good share of them on his political crony and bed-mate, Madame Thu, the An Quang lady Deputy from Hue. In any case, he is flat broke. Additionally, he is, at the moment, over \$3,000 in debt to me and there is a limit as to how much I can personally help him financially.

What I would like for you to do now is to attempt to line up some financial support to sustain Chau while he is in Paris and possibly (through some of his many friends who hold important positions in the US Government) arrange for him to get a visa to come to the US. Incidentally, although he has his Vietnamese passport, the passport expired on the 3rd of September 1969, so it's going to be a dilly of an effort required to get him legal entry anywhere. It's always possible, of course, that Cambodia or the other country he goes to for political asylum will not grant it and will return him to the Government of Vietnam. Alternatively, they may grant him political asylum, but forbid his departure to go to France or elsewhere.

While in hiding, Chau is writing extensively and I dare say may offer me a copy of his writings. Additionally, he is making comments on the several papers that you have put together or that friends of yours have written. I will attempt to get these comments to you soonest.

It seems to me that there would be any number of groups interested in employing Chau even at a foreign location so as to interview him or sponsor his writings and observations on the political scene in Vietnam, possibly not. In any case, you are better qualified than I (and certainly in a helluva lot better position than I) to explore this possibility. I would greatly appreciate your doing this as soon as possible.

When you write to me, address the letter to Frenchy Zois, at the same address as mine, in that I have good reason to believe that both my phone calls and my mail are being examined.

I have to return to the US for the Fulbright hearings beginning February 15th and will probably be in Washington a period of three or four days. Time is so short that I doubt I can stop by Los Angeles. Possibly you can schedule yourself to be on the east coast while I am there. It's possible that I will come back through Paris and, therefore, would not even be returning to the west coast.

I cannot tell you how completely the Mission here has misread the significance of what is going on. The official position is "hands off," not recognizing that the image of the Thieu government can suffer irreparable damage if things continue on their present course. Right now, corps commanders and division commanders (according to one of these gentlemen) are being directed to sign a letter applauding the action of the Assembly members who signed the petition against the three deputies and damning all who took either a middle ground (neutral) or anti stance against the GVN. At the same time, one Provincial Council Chief has told my political reporter that he is under "orders" from the Provincial Council to get a Provincial Council resolution signed by all Provincial Council members condemning all who oppose the government. Quite frankly, we ^{went to him} ~~admit~~ to this thing before with Ngo Dinh Diem and the heavy handed, dictatorial approach Thieu is now taking could well be the one action that could now sabotage the very successful efforts underway in the field. I guess it has always been thus in Vietnam.

Best regards and I expect an answer PDQ.

